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SUBJECT: PROPOSED AGENDA FOR APRIL 12 CARICOM-USTR
TRADE MEETING

ACTION REQUEST FOR USTR

1.. CARICOM Secretariat sent post a copy of a March 29 letter from CARICOM Secretary General Carrington to USTR Portman regarding a meeting with CARICOM Trade Ministers on April 12 and requested Ambassador's assistance in facilitating a response from USTR.

12. BEGIN TEXT: The U.S. Secretary of State, Dr. Condoleezza Rice, and the Foreign Ministers of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) held a very productive meeting in the Bahamas on 21-22 March, 2006, as part of our efforts to strengthen cooperation, with a view to enhancing CARICOM-US relations. During that meeting, the Ministers and the Secretary of State reviewed initiatives to promote regional economic reform and integration, and underscored the importance of trade as an engine of economic growth and development for the countries of the Caribbean Community. They also took note of the significant progress being made in restructuring the economies of CARICOM Member States through the creation of a Single Market and Economy - a vital component of which is the establishment of a Regional Development Fund.

To advance these critical trade and development issues, the meeting confirmed the importance of a dialogue between CARICOM Trade Ministers and yourself as the United States Trade Representative.

The CARICOM Ministers of Trade are appreciative of your readiness to meet with them in Washington on Wednesday, 12 April, 2006. Among the issues Minister would like to discuss are:

1. an extension of the waiver for CBI (which expired in December 2005)

2. possibility of negotiating an appropriate US-CARICOM Trade Agreement

3. a re-configured Trade and Investment Council and the modalities attendant hereto (as suggested by the US Secretary of State on the occasion of the recently

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concluded meeting)

4. a proposed Conference on the Caribbean in 200 along the lines of the Conference held on Africa (using the occasion of June 2006 proposed for the commemoration of a Caribbean-American Heritage Month as the launch pad), and

5. outlook for the Doha Development Agenda

I would appreciate receiving your reaction to the items proposed for discussion as well as any suggestions you may wish to make to ensure a productive and successful outcome. I would also appreciate receiving from your office details of the venue and other arrangement for the meeting in order to advise Caribbean ministers.

Yours sincerely,

Edwin W. Carrington
Secretary-General

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END TEXT.

3. Post point of contact is Ed Luchessi,
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